

Nahum — The Prophet Who Announced Judgment

Series: 30 Prophets of the Bible - Dr. Randy White

I. Identity of Nahum

Name and Meaning

- “Nahum” (Hebrew: נַחֻם, *Nahum*)
 - Root: נחם (*nacham*) – “to comfort,” “to console”
 - Ironic tension: A prophet of “comfort” delivering judgment
 - Judah is the implicit recipient of hope
 - Nahum 1:7 (KJV)
 - * “The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.”

Only Biblical Reference

- Nahum 1:1 – “The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.”
- No genealogy, no mention elsewhere in Scripture
- One of the most obscure prophets biographically

“The Elkoshite” – Location Debate

- Unknown location of “Elkosh”
- Major proposals:
 - **Galilee** (later tradition connects with Capernaum – “village of Nahum”)
 - **Judah** (likely due to pro-Judah tone)
 - **Assyria (modern Iraq)** – later Jewish tradition places Elkosh near Nineveh
- No definitive evidence

II. Historical Setting

Timeframe

- Likely between:
 - Fall of Thebes (No-Amon) – Nahum 3:8 (c. 663 BC)
 - Fall of Nineveh – 612 BC
- Most scholars place Nahum around **650–630 BC**
- Nahum 1:11 may be a key to placing Nahum on a timeline
 - Who is this wicked counselor? Could it be Reb-sekeah of 2 Kings 18:26–33?
 - If so, it places Nahum in the time of Hezekiah, and thus in the time period of Isaiah, Amos, Hosea, etc.

Political Context

- Assyria at its height, but beginning to weaken
- Nineveh = capital of the Assyrian Empire
- Judah is under Assyrian pressure

Relationship to Jonah

- Jonah: warning and repentance of Nineveh (c. 8th century BC)
- Nahum: declaration of final destruction
- Demonstrates:
 - Repentance was temporary

- God’s standard for Nineveh remained

III. Nature of Nahum’s Ministry

Primary Message

- Judgment against Nineveh (Assyria)
- Comfort for Judah

Type of Prophet

- Not a preacher of repentance (like Jonah)
- A declarer of irreversible judgment
- A poet of divine vengeance and justice

Tone and Style

- Highly poetic, vivid, even violent imagery
- Military and battlefield language
- Structured like a war oracle

IV. Structure of the Book

Chapter 1 – The Character of the LORD

- Divine wrath and justice emphasized (1:2–3, 1:6)
- Key theological statement:
 - Nahum 1:2 (KJV)
 - * “God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious...”
- Partial acrostic (alphabetic structure in Hebrew, though incomplete) (1:2–8)

Chapter 2 – The Siege and Fall of Nineveh

- Graphic battle imagery (2:3–4, 2:6–7)
- Rapid, almost cinematic descriptions (2:3–5)
- Emphasis on inevitability of defeat (2:8–10, 2:13)

Chapter 3 – The Reasons for Judgment

- Charges against Nineveh:
 - Violence (3:1, 3:19)
 - Deceit (3:1, 3:4)
 - Witchcraft (Nahum 3:4) (3:4)
- Comparison to Thebes (3:8–10)
 - “Populous No” = No-Amon = Thebes
 - Amon is not the Hebrew word for multitude but an Egyptian god
- Final taunt: Nineveh’s total collapse (3:18–19)

V. Comfort from Nahum

A Note of Good Tidings and Peace

- Nahum 1:15
 - “Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace...”

An Echo in Later Scripture

- Isaiah 52:7
- Romans 10:15 (language closely parallels)